

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 ICA-11 OES-07
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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8559
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 05043

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IR, PEPR
SUBJ: SHAH UNDERLINES POLITICAL USE OF OIL

1. LOCAL PRESS GAVE FRONT PAGE TREATMENT TO SHAH'S MAY 24 CHICAGO TRIBUNE INTERVIEW. HEADLINES HIGHLIGHTED SHAH'S WARNING THAT OIL MIGHT BE USED AS "A WEAPON TO FORCE ISRAEL INTO A MORE FLEXIBLE MIDDLE EAST POLICY, BUT ONLY UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNITED NATIONS". GIVEN EQUALLY PROMINENT ATTENTION WAS THE SHAH'S PRONOUNCEMENT THAT HE HAS NO OBJECTION TO THE SOVIET UNION BUYING OIL FROM OPEC: "IF THEY ARE GOOD CUSTOMERS, WHY SHOULD WE REFRAIN?"

2. IN A RELATED MATTER THE SHAH IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT HE HAS NOT DECIDED WHETHER TO PUSH FOR AN OPEC PRICE INCREASE AT THE END OF THE YEAR AND THAT HE WANTS TO CONSULT OTHER OPEC MEMBERS, PARTICULARLY SAUDI ARABIA.

3. COMMENT: SHAH IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS HAS RAISED POSSIBILITY OF OIL EMBARGO AGAINST ISRAEL--ALWAYS WITH THE CAVEAT THAT SUCH ACTION, TO BE EFFECTIVE, MUST BE TAKEN IN CONCERT WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN A UN CONTEXT. THE TRIBUNE
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INTERVIEW IS THE MOST EXPLICIT PUBLIC STATEMENT ON EMBARGO POLICY AND A CHANGE FROM HIS EARLIER VIEW OF LAST YEAR THAT OIL SHOULD NOT BE USED AS POLITICAL WEAPON. THE SHAH REPORTEDLY IS A BIT PUT OUT AT THE SOMEWHAT SENSATIONALIST TREATMENT GIVEN WHAT HE CONSIDERS AN OLD POSITION (IT DATES BACK AT LEAST SIX MONTHS TO HIS WASHINGTON VISIT), BUT THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THIS IS A CONSIDERED

POSITION HE HAS TAKEN, PRESUMABLY AS PART OF HIS
CONTINUING IMAGE CAMPAIGN AMONG THE ARABS BUT ALSO, WE
THINK, TO PUT SOME EDGE ON HIS REPORTED GENUINE DISAPPOINT-
MENT AT ISRAELI RECALCITRANCE IN THE PEACE PROCESS.
SULLIVAN

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